Higher yields by Gene Technology

*554. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that developments in gene technology promise new gentically-based advances, leading to higher yields and better quality;

(b) whether introducing any new technology needs extensive testing and safety regulations, alongwith proper management knowledge and trust; and

(c) if so, what are Government's plans in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Assessment of Gentically Modified (GM) organisms technologies, for bio-safety is mandatory. The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Environment and Forests have regulatory procedures under the Environments (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Rules—1989. These Rules were notified on 05.12.1989. The Rules are applicable for taking up activities like manufacture, sale, import, use and storage involving recombinant DNA technology/GM products. The mechanism involves different committees/authorities namely Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM), Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Committee (MEC) and Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) etc. These operate from central to district level for proper risk assessment, management, knowledge and trust and release of products.

Menace of Deer and Neel Gai in Mehasana

†*555. DR. A. K. PATEL : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that population of Deer and Neel Gai is constantly increasing in Mehsana District of Gujarat, is causing damage to crops in many areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) steps proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent this menace?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) (a) and (b) The Government of Gujarat has reported an increase in the population of Neel Gai and Black buck in Mehsana District of Gujarat. In the year 1999-2000 the population of Neel Gai and Black buck has been estimated to be 989 and 6479 respectively. These free ranging population cause damage to the agricultural crops. Twenty complaints of damage to crops by these animals have been reported since 1999.

(c) The steps taken to prevent the menace are as follows :

1. The Chief Wild Life Warden are empowered under the Wild Life (Protection) act, 1972 to permit hunting of wild animals that have become dangerous to human life or property, including standing crops.

2. The State Government has introduced a scheme for fencing of farmlands on 50% subsidy basis.

3. The farmers are encourged to make use of fire crackers and drum beating to scared away the animals.

Computerised rail reservation at Sivaganga

*556. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sivaganga and other adjacent Railway stations in Tamil Nadu do not have computerised reservation centres:

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when computerised reservations centres would be provided there?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. However, a work for provision of computerised reservation facilities at Sivaganga railway station has been sanctioned in the Annual Budget 2002-03. Computerised reservation facilities have also been sanctioned at Manamadurai and Paramakudi railway station in the Annual Budget 2002-03 which are located at a distance of 20 km and 45 km respectively from Sivaganga. Beside above approvals, these facilities are already available at Karaikkudi railway station located at a distance of 41 km from Sivaganga.

Other adjacent Stations do not qualify for provision of these facilities as per the latest computerised reservation policy of Indian Railways.